STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A PARADOXICAL CONUNDRUM

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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During the Cold War, the principle aim of United States security policy towards Africa was to contain Soviet influence and to eliminate communist and radical nationalist governments and movements throughout the continent. The United States provided military aid and other security assistance to Sub-Saharan African countries, which were selected for their strategic importance in the Cold War duel with the Soviet Union despite their often questionable commitment to democracy, human rights, and equitable development. In reassessing United States interests and security policy in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Post Cold War era, it is important to understand modern Africa's past and the peculiar relationship of politics, economics, African culture and the civil-military chaos created by a history of colonialism and neocolonialism. Strangely enough, the key to unlocking this destructive relationship in order to promote regional stability may lie with the United States military. This study addresses Africa's colonial past and suggests key initiatives that the United States should continue to pursue as part of its national security strategy.

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A post Cold War political order is emerging in Sub-Saharan Africa. At this time the jury is still out as to whether Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to sink further into chaos or reverse its downward trend and become a viable member of the global community. Regardless of the current administration's desires, Sub-Saharan Africa's continued dilemma will force United States policy makers to confront Africa and develop policy initiatives that promote regional stability. During Africa's colonial period, the United States had no strong vital interest in Africa economically, militarily, or politically. For most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States was able to preserve its isolation from power politics and enjoy an unprecedented degree of security because of the balance of power on the European continent maintained by Britain.[1] However, the United States has inherited the colonial past, and Africa is too big, with too many people and too much potential to simply "write off". Reassessing United States strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa requires an understanding of modern Africa's past and the peculiar relationship this past has created among politics, civil-military relations, economics, and culture in most African states as a result of colonialism and neocolonialism. Only then, can strategists create a viable regional strategy for United States policy makers. Strangely enough, the key to promoting regional stability may lie with the United States military.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Present day conflicts and problems in Sub-Saharan Africa stem largely from the economic failure, political instability, corrupt militaries, diverse social challenges and environmental crisis associated with a history of colonial rule. European countries, like the English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Belgians, and Italians, ruled colonial Africa to serve their own economic interests and showed little concern for the long-term consequences to Africa's native people. The two major European powers most closely associated with establishing and influencing the colonial systems in Africa were Great Britain and France.[2] However, the late arrival of the Italians and Germans to nationalism and colonialism created competition among the European powers for African colonies which led to the colonial powers meeting in Berlin to divide Africa. The Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885 helped to formalize and establish Africa's boundaries in part to avoid European conflict among each other in Africa.[3] The borders established during the Berlin Conference split up the various ethnic tribes and established boundaries, which with minor modifications throughout the years, are still in effect. However, these borders in the beginning were drawn largely along geographical footprints without regard to the various ethnic

tribal relationships. Over the years, this has created an insurmountable obstacle to viable nation states. Without national identities founded on compatible cultural ideas, the ethnic divisions have festered over the years into the ethnic tension that impacts the various regions of Africa today.

European countries that had colonies in Africa did little to prepare them for independence and self-government. European colonists accepted that it was necessary to create a class of intermediaries to assist them in executing colonial policies. But in creating this class of intermediaries, Europeans failed to give them any real power or authority. Decisions were made by Europeans or white colonists and native Africans gained no real experience in governing. Once the Europeans accepted that they had to leave, they quickly divested themselves of African holdings during the 1950's and early 1960's. Only Portugal held on well into the mid 70's, and would be one of the last European countries to divest itself of African interest. Thus, African nations are relatively new and little foundation exists for an experienced governing class.[4]

Ironically, history is replete throughout colonial rule with various attempts to establish independence by native Africans. Most of these uprisings occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For the most part, African leaders were unable to unite the various tribal groups in a common cause against their European rulers. Without a national identity, the superior military technology, logistics and organizational skills of the Europeans always won out. Only after World War II, with its devastation of the European continent, would the Europeans relent to allow African nations to gain their independence. But the lack of a national identity remained.

The failure of the European nations to lay the foundation for a political identity and self governance of the newly independent African nations provided fertile ground for the rise of corruption and further exploitation of the people. In this environment, military dictatorships seized the reigns of power throughout the various regions of Africa. Additionally, the struggle for political and economic stability of the newly independent African nations throughout the sixties and seventies gave rise to the involvement of both the Soviet Union and the United States, who rushed to align these new nations within their respective Cold War camps.

Africa's involvement in the world economy during the colonial period was shaped to the advantage of the European colonizers.[5] From the fifteenth through the nineteenth century, Africa's primary economic link with the world was through the export of slaves, while during the later nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, the export of raw materials dominated African economics.[6] As numerous African nations gained independence after World War II,

such valued commodities as ivory, gold, diamonds and oil should have brought economic growth, prosperity and a degree of regional stability; unfortunately, this was not the case. Africa largely remained dependent on outside powers for its economy. With an export economy and little or no diversified capitol, the new nations' fortunes rose and fell with the markets, which largely worked against them. Even when the markets favored them, political corruption and instability robbed the nations of the opportunity to build the economic and social infrastructure necessary to successful self-governance.

During the initial period after independence, foreign investment was a key source of capitol for developing nations. However, private investment was in short supply for the kind of long-range development that the newly independent African nations needed. Some European powers attempted to assist their former colonies, but Europe's own economic problems stemming from World War II limited their efforts. The major private U.S. investment being made outside of the United States were by small groups of oil companies who were building refineries and discovering ways to pump oil fields out of Latin America and the Middle East.[7] Oil exportation in Africa was not a specific national interest of the United States and could be more easily gotten elsewhere.

Political instability, caused by a lack of governing experience, the continuing shakeout of the independence movement, and the Cold War, heighten the economic crises. There was unwillingness by private investors to involve themselves in economic ventures where the lives of their workers were threatened and their investment was at risk. In addition, many developing African countries were anti-capitalist, associating capitalism with colonialism, and creating a further hostile environment for private investment. Private investors, beset with problems of a lack of infrastructure, corruption and instability, increasingly avoided Africa. Foreign aid, mostly shaped by Cold War ideology, was directed to the military or the private coffers of the dictators. Without a secure and stable environment there was no little chance of prosperity for the new African nations.

Unprepared for self rule and left with a colonial economic system and structure, the African nations failed to match their economic development to the fast rising birth rates and expectations of their respective populations. World markets, a lack of infrastructure, and involvement in the Cold War worked against them. Most African nations slipped deeper into rule by dictatorship and poverty.[8]

African militaries are also a product of their colonial heritage. While the colonial powers established African militaries to provide for security and stability during colonial rule, they were established primarily for internal security and used as protection for the European colonial

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citizens and their property. African colonial states rarely dealt with outside forces or attacks against their borders and had little need for a capable, traditional national military. The absence of antagonism among the major European colonial powers as a result of the Berlin Conference and the shared weak capabilities of the colonial militaries resulted in the colonial states in Africa not fighting each other. Additionally, the absence of external threats provided European rulers little incentive to develop competent or professional African military officers or militaries.

Colonialism by its very nature is exploitive and every police force is subject to corruption as a result of their duties and Africa was no exception. As national police forces, the African militaries served their colonial masters and took them as their role models. Corruption among post independence militaries and civilian rulers has continued to undermine the professionalism by wasting foreign aid money on irrelevant equipment, and focusing officers' attention on private financial endeavors.[9] Past practices have led to current corruption and little public trust and more importantly, less than professional national militaries.

The recruitment of Africa's tribesmen to enforce security policy rather than using their own troops was the preferred choice of the colonial powers. African troops cost less, often demonstrated a strong loyalty and local knowledge, and were politically more expendable as casualties among Europeans. How the Europeans selected and organized these militaries contributes to today's problems. European colonists focused on assured loyalty among certain tribes, insured potential opposition was divided, and mainly used the national army rather than an established police force for domestic purposes to reduce the financial cost of internal security. Colonial authorities often deliberately selected African military leaders and soldiers from indigenous minority ethnic groups, from "more martial" groups, or from rural areas that had cooperated with the colonizers and demonstrated appropriate loyalty.[10] As a result, colonial authorities "ethiczed" the African militaries both intentionally and unintentionally. Although the initiatives helped colonial authorities achieve competent security in the short term, in the long run, "ethiczing" had a damaging impact on the African military and civil military relationships once independence started spreading throughout Africa.

When most African nations gained independence from their European rulers in the 1950's and 1960's, a dangerous precedence was already established. The Europeans' lack of foresight in developing an indigenous and professional officer corps among the African militaries led to ambiguity about the purpose and role of national militaries. The ethiczing of the military further confused their purpose and role among the officer corps, the soldiers, and the people. In the economic and political instability following independence, the militaries' confusion accelerated the instability. Further, these factors, along with the rise of military corruption and

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the rise of parallel security forces, ensured that African militaries would lack the political loyalty and military efficiency required of a professional army in a democracy.[11]

The failure of the colonizers to encourage national political identities and political institutions among African nations, and as indicated earlier, the recruitment of selected ethnic groups for its domestic military purposes contributed to a deleterious precedent of corrupt or politicized armies and the abuse of power.[12] This ethnic inclusion of one group and exclusion of another group, especially in the hierarchy of military command and civilian leadership, split many African nations internally into ethnic tribalism. Failed African states can be attributed in part to this type of mistrust in the government system and the military that supports it. Combined with the economic legacy of colonialism, these factors created the conundrum that is modern Africa.

MODERN AFRICA

Following World War II, the European major powers saw their once vast colonial empires ended. The United States emerged as the dominant western power, providing assistance in the rebuilding of Western Europe, and the Soviet Union emerged as its major competitor. European countries no longer enjoyed their favorable balance of power or the aristocratic rule as they did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most European colonies renewed their demands for independence. Many European nations, having little real choice, complied with those demands peacefully, although some armed rebellion was required. The world's two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States had begun to engage each other in a game of international chess between democracy and communism, using all elements of their respective national power (economic, political, military and informational) to promote and impose one ideology over the other around the globe.

This competition resulted in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet led Warsaw Pact. Both of these alliances sold weapons to satellite countries, engaged in proxy conflicts, supported political and military coups, and generally engaged each other on a global scale in the Cold War. Sub-Saharan Africa was one playground in this strategic gamesmanship.

The Africa of today emerged from its colonial past through its struggle for independence and involvement in the Cold War over a period of fifty years. While each African nation's experience is unique, each is also similar. The new nations' peoples soon became split into several main groups upon gaining independence. The first were the ruling minority, composed of landowners or merchants, whose vested interest remained in the preservation of the status

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quo. Instead of industrializing themselves and becoming economically independent, most landowners and merchants chose to continue with the old colonial ways of exporting their nation's crops and natural resources to western markets to maintain their wealth and power. In a very real way, this group, whether black or white, never gave up the colonial way of life and only active rebellion could dissuade them of their neo-colonialism. A second group consisted of peasants, villagers and shopkeepers who bore the brunt of colonial hardship and the daily struggle for survival, some 80% of the population. They demanded a better life once their respective nation had gained independence. A third group, and perhaps the most influential, were the urban intellectuals; educated in Western ideas and committed to nationalism and modernization. This group gave voice to the resentment to the old colonial way of life and the aspirations of the people. They actively sought to transform the political, social and economic fabric of their respective countries.[13] At first, capitalism dominated their methods, but with disillusionment, they turned to communism. A fourth group, the military, with its own colonial heritage, held responsibility for security and stability in this volatile environment.

In the beginning, as a result of their colonial heritage these new nations lacked the government administration and political cohesion necessary to address the problems confronting them. Unlike the people of the United States and other western democracies, most African citizens had no natural loyalty to their state and no tradition of cooperation except for the common desire of eliminating colonial rule. Sometimes the opposition would not only be against their former colonial ruler, but also against the new ruling elites.[14] Throughout the period of initial independence and the Cold War, African nations were faced with internal political, economic, and military struggles, as well as, struggling with their relationships with other nations. Government and economic instability and corrupt militaries contributed to most of the earlier failures of the newly independent African states and continue to plague Africa today.

The absence of a strong sense of national consciousness is reflected in the way many of the leaders of newly developed nations built themselves up as symbols of nationhood.[15] Often the African militaries served as these leaders true base of power, instead of the national constitutions. The new leaders often crossed the civil-military line of authority with little consideration of constitutional rule, confusing policing and national military roles. Such casual transgressions have diluted both the professionalism and political responsibility of many African militaries.[16] Nor are the militaries innocent of such sins.

Following independence and into the early 1960's, whites dominated the officers' corps of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, a fact that helped to trigger selected coup attempts in those countries by young African officers who sought rapid promotion and better pay. The

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involvement of African military officers as political actors, which often led to military dictatorship, further eroded their professionalism and national prestige. The rise and record of numerous military dictators, such as Samuel Doe of Liberia, Mobutu Ses of Zaire and the widely known exploits of Idi Amin of Uganda, offer no basis for national trust or democratic military professionalism. Not surprisingly, African militaries' lack of professionalism and national purpose translates into mediocre military capabilities.[17] African states are now actively examining multinational forces, private security organizations, and Western aid to resolve security issues and upgrade the professionalism of their military.[18]

In reality, these states are reaping the harvests of their predecessors. A number of modern factors lead to today's unprofessional and often corrupt culture in many African militaries. African rulers often sacrificed long term institutionalization for short-term expediency. Short-term political survival was the main incentive for rulers to compromise military autonomy and professionalism. Often a stronger need for political loyalty rather than military efficiency drove development of the military. Although independent of colonial authority, these new leaders followed the colonialism example of using soldiers for domestic partisan purpose. Senior military commanders normally came from the same ethnic tribe or geographical region as the civilian or military leader, a legacy from the European colonists' practice of playing one ethnic group against another. In Africa, personal rule and ethnicization of the militaries is closely linked together. Ethnicization of the military continues in many countries and will likely continue as long as personal political rule continues in Africa countries. Other leaders have also tolerated and encourage military corruption and created parallel security units as counterweights to the existing armed forces.[19] A proper purpose and role for militaries is one of the significant challenges that the United States faces in Africa.

In contrast, some scholars have considered the existence of the carry over colonial military as a mixed blessing for the newly independent African nation and their new rulers. Although the Cold War African militaries are a reflection of their former European rulers, African armies in some ways have helped to symbolize a nation identity, provide employment for its citizens and security for the government.

During the 1960's and 1970's internal transformations of developing African countries produced second and third order effects beyond their borders. Those internal upheavals disturbed an international system of frontier borders largely defined between the two superpowers' spheres of influence in their Cold War rivalry. As a consequence, the superpowers focused their interest on the sub-continent and dragged the somewhat willing Africans into their struggle. The principle aims of United States security policy toward Sub-

Sahara Africa were to contain Soviet influence, eliminate communist and radical nationalist governments, and control these types of movements throughout the continent. Several parts of Africa, such as the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa, were considered geopolitical important to the United States.

During the Cold War the leading recipients of United States security and economic aide between 1962 and 1988 were Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Sudan, Zaire (now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo), and Somalia. Despite enormous aid, these countries suffered severe internal conflict once the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was over, resulting in the failed states of Somalia and Liberia. While it is notably that African leaders were shrewd enough to play one superpower against the other, and as noble as the Cold War was, it is equally true the United States helped bolster the African single party and military dictatorship models of government, and all their corruption, under the umbrella of preventing a communist takeover.

The end of the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union had significant ramifications for international politics and Sub-Saharan Africa. First, it changed the distribution of power in the global system. With the demise of the Soviet Union, a new multi-polar system emerged with the United States retaining its military superiority, but sharing economic dominance of the world with Japan, Germany and other first tier nations. Second, the end of the Cold War reduced the high premium placed on military power and alliances in inter-state relations. Third, in the wake of the end of the Cold War, international cooperation, economic globalism, environmental protection and issues of human rights became the dominant focus of inter-state relations.[20] More specifically, the ending of the Cold War transformed the nature of bilateral relationships with and among African states.

During the Cold War, most African rulers were able to manipulate the superpowers' rivalry, counting on their economic, political and military support to remain in power. The importance of security issues at that time and the in flow of military aid elevated the status of the African armed services above civil society. This provided the rational and legitimacy for ruling and the consequent militarization of society by many African leaders.[21] The huge supplies of weapons made readily available through military aid from the superpowers sustained African rulers in power during the Cold War. Presidents such as Mobutu Sese Seko, Mengistu H. Marian, Samuel Doe and scores of other African dictators were able to maintain dominance over their rivals and the rest of society through the direct support of the United States and the Soviet Union.[22] Even when the United States was not providing direct aid secondary players, such as Britain, Belgium, France and to lesser degree Portugal, had been systematically

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providing military assistance and aid during the Cold War to foster their economic and geopolitical spheres of influences in Africa. Ironically, at the end of the Cold War there were great expectations that authoritarian rule in Africa would fold under the massive demand for democratization. Sadly this has not been the case.

Africa remains a victim of its past and the relative power of its peculiar military. An unwillingness of military supported rulers to give up power in favor of a democratic process and a waning interest of western nations in Africa have magnified the problems of colonial transformation. Unable to resolve internal conflicts and create the stability required for economic growth, Africa sinks further into instability and failing states. In the post Cold War, United States involvement Sub-Saharan Africa has been characterized by crisis-response; conduct of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations; and peace support operations.[23] A tremendous amount of resources have been expended in these short-term gains, but nothing to prevent the next crisis. Throughout the nineties, the United States has grappled with one Sub-Saharan African lesson after another-- Somalia, Liberia, and the horrific genocide that took place in Rwanda in the mid 90's. For the United States, a crisis response approach must be replaced by a longer term peacetime engagement that shapes Africa to a future compatible with its interests.[24] The ability for Sub-Saharan African (which accounts for 48 countries) militaries to provide for a secure environment and conflict resolution is necessary to support economic and social development and Africa's inclusion as a viable member of the global community.

THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Afrophiles are often subjected to the charge of advocating a region in search of a United States national interest. To the critics' credit, there is a basic element of truth. No African country can threaten the United States' survival, security, or territorial integrity—so a search for a vital interest would be in vain. However, in terms of United States broader security interests, Africa represents a vulnerable flank to such transnational threats as widespread epidemic diseases, narcotics trafficking, organized crime, and serious environmental problems.[25] Americans' compassion is stirred by suffering and our fundamental values require support of humanitarian and democratic principles. Other political and economic trends also drive the United States towards a strategic reengagement with Sub-Saharan Africa.

The United States now has long standing relations and historical ties with nations in this region and a responsibility for the legacy of the Cold War. Africa is the ancestral home to at least 12% of the American population, and African immigrants continue to make America their

home. Domestic politics will increasingly be shaped by this vote. The United States also has significant and growing commercial interests in African markets as outlets for U.S. foreign trade and investment. The United States receives approximately 16 percent of its petroleum imports from Africa.[26] Sub-Saharan Africa matters and it is becoming increasingly obvious in a global community.

At the same time there has always been a marginalization and pervasive negative stereotype that has long plagued United States policy towards Africa even at the height of the Cold War. While a few have suggested this is racially motivated, it is more complicated than that. Africa is too big and too diverse for the United States to apply a uniform policy prescription. It covers more than 11.7 million square miles and has more than 600 million inhabitants. And, there is no single Africa; rather there are 54 different countries (48 countries below the Sahara) and over 700 distinct nations or ethnic groups with as many dialects, cultures, and aspirations.[27] Africa is a true conundrum for American policy makers.

After many years, Sub-Saharan Africa has been undergoing a fundamental transformation of its sociopolitical order resulting from colonialism and early independence. A continued understanding of Sub-Saharan Africa complexity and contemporary geostrategic dynamics is becoming a major challenge for the United States.[28] Africa will continue to be a place of considerable social, political and economic turmoil. It will suck the United States into its problems and our political leaders will have to gain consensus on a regional strategy for Africa as it exists today and focus on the various sub-regions versus a one policy fits all. The key national interest for the United States is regional stability. Stability is the link to good governance and economic prosperity, both essential to address Africa's social problems. Stability will allow access to the region, to include oil and other strategic resources. Promotion of democracy, internal security, improved economic solutions and robust health policies to combat widespread epidemic diseases and better economic development can help counter narcotic trafficking and environmental problems in Africa, but are only possible with stability. So the real issue for American policymakers is what to do about Africa, not why Africa should be of concern to the United States.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Africa remains a conundrum today and the issues, challenges, and opportunities in the various Sub-Saharan African states are multiple. With the end of the Cold War, strategic involvement of both the United States and the Soviet Union waned. Somalia and apartheid gave some life to western interest, but with the Somalia debacle and apartheid ended, the policies

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that shaped American strategy in Africa moved further from public view and decision makers' interest.[29] But Africa continued in a spiraling downward pattern, trapped in its colonial and Cold War legacies because the fundamental issues of independence were never resolved. In some cases, regimes became failed states after the Cold War patronage stopped. In others, political rulers did not invest in their own countries and the internal corruption at the highest levels created the same conditions. Yet, in the 1990's there has been a parallel renewal of African desire for progress and stability. This internal renewal offers opportunities and challenges for the United States as Africans take collective internal steps to build security within the sub-continent.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) is an attempt to organize the region for the benefit of all. Unfortunately, the OAU lacks resources and cohesive power, it is too large an organization geographically, and is not strong enough politically to engage or solve most of Africa's severe conflicts that are currently going on. It is, however, a vessel for potential intervention. Below the OAU are sub regional organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Because of the geographic closeness of nations belonging to these sub-regional organizations, which are smaller in membership, they have been more persistence although not always successful in resolving conflict resolution. Of the three sub-regional organizations mentioned, the ECOWAS has been the most effective.[30]

Although these sub-regional organizations were designed to promote regional dialogue on mutual political and economic interests and conflict resolution, armed conflict continues today in Africa. Learning the lessons of past history, ECOWAS has taken the initiative to develop and plan new multi-tiered conflict management structures, including a council of meditation, security regional "early warning" conflict observatories and peacekeeping reserve forces. The 1998 signing of the West African Small Arms Moratorium has signaled that region's determination to limit the scourge of war and consolidate stability in order to enhance the prospects for democracy and economic development. For ECOWAS efforts, the United States has already contributed over $100 million dollars to continue building peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia.[31]

Other reforms have taken place in Africa due to international pressure and internal domestic instability. A number of African states have held elections in a bid to construct new domestic and international sources of legitimacy. In some cases (Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon, Togo) these elections were manipulated to keep incumbents in power, but in others (Benin, Mali, Namibia, Malawi and most notably South Africa) leadership changed as a result of popular participation.[32] It is clear many African states and their peoples are ready to move forward.

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African militaries will have to play a critical role in promoting United States regional interests in Africa. As discussed above, the militaries are a large part of the instability problem. At the same time, economic development and political reform are unlikely to occur without a stable security environment, domestically and externally. The military element of national power is juxtaposed over the other elements of power. The unprofessionalism and corruption of the military has disillusioned the citizens and deprived them of stability and rapid conflict resolution. Foreign investors do not want to do business in weak states where the ruling regime cannot guarantee the security of property or provide minimum public order.[33] Thus, the lack of a professional democratic military has also deprived the citizens of their right to economic security and social justice. The military is a key to reform and change in Africa.

Africa may be prepared for United States intervention under the right conditions. Throughout the early stages of independence, France was one of the most influential post colonial actors from the 1960's through the 1990s. The perception of France's decline or waning interest has led to the desire among African nations associated with France to build closer ties with the United States, particular the United States military.[34] Others argue in the Post Cold War era, the U.S. faces new rivals in Africa, including the challenge of Islamic extremism and a renewed competing European interests, particularly in central Africa. United States policymakers have also become increasingly concerned about the impact of a wide variety of known transnational threats: global problems that could have a direct or indirect impact on the United States.[35] Moreover, some modern African states have actively sought ties with non-traditional partners such as Saudi Arabia, North Korea and Iran. Such actions suggest the United States must act now to shape a region favorable to U.S interests. The African security environment may be the most complex on earth, with a sometimes bewildering array of actors, shifting affiliations, and unique characteristics.[36]

U.S. ENGAGEMENT: A NECCESARY STRATEGY

A growing policy of limited engagement has characterized United States strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa since post World War II independence. Engagement policy can be summed up as an evolving and cautious process. In the Eisenhower administration (1952 – 1959), there was little interest or experience in dealing with Africa.[38] The United States focused primarily on rebuilding Europe and the strategic mindset during this administration was that African decolonization would weaken the still young NATO allies.[39] The accelerated political independence of Africans beginning in the 1960's did not change the fundamental reality of United States policy in the region—little or no strategic interest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Although the Kennedy administration (1960-1963) was an enthusiastic supporter of African decolonization, there was also a growing concern with radicalism and Soviet activities in the region that shaded the little African policy. These activities expanded as the African intellectuals sought alternative solutions to Africa's colonialism and neo-colonialism. In response to this the Kennedy administration introduced the key concepts of "Nation Building" and "Economic Assistance" into Africa. One of the enduring legacies from this era was the creation and today's continued involvement of the famed "Peace Corps".

Throughout the sixties and seventies, the growing radicalism and involvement with the Soviets and Chinese, combined with an emerging anti-Americanism on the part of African leaders, was of primary concern to both the Nixon and Ford administrations. President Nixon sought to pursue a strategy of cultivating and supporting regional surrogates and friendly dictators through economic aid.[40] Despite this increasing strategy of engagement, there was little to impact on economic development and the development of effective governance. Instead, direct aid became a source of corruption. In the 1970's and 1980's aid increasing took the form of foreign arms sales. Foreign arms sales did little to positively influence the professionalism of the African militaries, and, some would argue, added to a horrific record of human rights violations.

During the Carter administration there would be a renewed interest in civil rights among the African people that the United States sought to support. At the same time pro-Soviet influence in Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia and the perception of a growing Soviet/Cuba "offensive" in the various regions of Africa raised new concerns. The country of South Africa became a test bed for the United States' support of international human rights. Though South Africa was farther advanced economically and militarily than most of its surrounding African neighbors, the Carter administration became mired in that country's internal conflict surrounding the minority regime.[41] The Cold War imperative of containing communist expansion at any cost collided directly with international and domestic opinion. In support of a more successful objective, Carter's administration used military aid and arms transfer as bargaining chips to win access to military bases in Somalia and Kenya to support America's Rapid Deployment Force.[42]

In the 1980's, the Reagan administration committed United States economic strength toward selected countries in Africa, adding finesse to an engagement strategy designed to contain the growing Soviet/Cuban influence by supporting the movement against radical or communist's regimes. His administration considered the Southern African civil rights movement to be part of a growing Communist offensive in the region.

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The first Bush administration is primarily noted for commitment of troops in support of the humanitarian relief effort in Somalia. Here, in support of the engagement strategy, the U.S. military led a coalition force in the early 90's in an admirable humanitarian effort to establish a secure environment in order for non-government agencies (NGO's) to distribute food to a starving population. Later, under the Clinton administration, the humanitarian language of the mission was changed in order to allow deployed forces to track down the notorious War Lord Mohammed Aidid and his top aides to bring them to justice. This reached a culminating point several months later on October 3, 1993, in the most intense 24 hour firefight since the Vietnam War, involving America's elite Ranger and Delta Force units. Eighteen American soldiers lost their lives against a very determined asymmetrical enemy. U.S. forces were subsequently withdrawal and American willingness to intervene in the region was undermined.

During the second half of the Clinton administration there were selective and limited United States policy initiatives towards Africa, culminating with a Presidential visit. Among these were support of economic reform, debt relief, and economic development. At the heart of these initiatives was an attempt to improve the institutional capacity and capability of African nations to respond to crises, halt corruption and establish macro-economic policies for African development. The United States sought to enhance the viability of several regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as a way of achieving its policy objectives.[43]

Policy analysts have taken mixed messages from the United States' engagement in modern Africa. Clearly no initiative has enjoyed overwhelming or sustained success. Equally clear is that African intervention is a proverbial tar baby and once you are directly engaged there are political consequences, as was the case in the civil rights of South Africa and the casualties in Somalia. Yet, successive administrations kept coming back to engagement because solving the African conundrum continues to serve U.S. interests in the long run.

CURRENT UNITED STATES INITIATIVES

The current administration seeks to achieve U.S. interests by the enhancement of a number of Clinton initiatives and the pursuit of these initiatives in a practical way. In short, current U.S. policy objectives for Africa are to expand trade and investment; promote sustainable growth in agriculture and economic development; and improve African capacity to prevent, mitigate, and resolve crisis and conflict in order to enhance regional stability.[44] Furthermore the U.S. would like to strengthen democracy, encourage good governance, create

respect for the rule of law, and help improve society through education. Lastly, the United States seeks to decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.[45] The current administration, under George W. Bush, has announced no changes concerning United States policy towards Africa, though it has announced plans to make Africa a special focus of its foreign policy.[46]

The United States ways and means of achieving its policy objectives include such initiatives as partnering with the Organization for African Unity (OAU). Between 1995 and 2000, the U.S. government provided more than $10 million dollars to the OAU to support institutional conflict resolution capabilities. This support has helped to expand the OAU mandate to encompass regular peacekeeping operations and conflict mediation services, which are at the heart of U.S. policy. Additionally, the U.S. provided $13 million dollars in Foreign Military Financing for Africa in fiscal year 2000 alone.[47]

One unique concept toward achieving United States security policy in Sub-Saharan Africa has been the United States military involvement with African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). In 1996, the United States under the Clinton administration initiated the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) to help prepare and enable African militaries to participate effectively in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations within Africa. Though the ACRI is a State Department supported and funded program, the executive agent for this military endeavor has been the U.S. European Command (EUCOM). The purpose of the ACRI is not to create a standing peacekeeping force. The United States policy objectives for the ACRI are to: train and equip African militaries to respond to peace support and complex humanitarian requirements; build and enhance sustainable indigenous peace support training capacity; provide effective command and control; and finally, enhance international, regional and sub-regional peace support capability. To date this policy initiative is one of the most effective strategic concepts developed between the United States and Sub-Sahara Africa.[48]

To qualify for the ACRI, an African nation military must meet certain standards. It must (1) be under the authority of a civilian democratic government, (2) demonstrate respect for human rights, (3) participate in or show interest in joining peacekeeping efforts, and (4) have a basic level of military proficiency.[49] Since July 1997, the ACRI has conducted initial battalion training in Senegal, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Ghana, Benin and Cote d'Ivoire. Follow-on training has occurred in Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Benin and Malawi.[50] What is intriguing about this concept, in light of Africa's colonial and Cold War legacies, is the initiative creates a direct link between aid and long term U.S. interests.

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The United States military, in particular the Army, has been proactive and innovative in conducting follow-on training of these African forces. Such an approach allows for continued exposure to democratic and professional forces in action and a progressive building block process to focus on commanders and staff at all levels, combining classroom instruction, field training and computer assisted simulation that inherently builds a professional, democratic military. The ACRI has also coordinated its activities closely with the humanitarian programs of France, Belgium and the United Kingdom. Instructors from these countries have participated in the ACRI training sessions, and a number of ACRI trainees have attended regional French and British sponsored peacekeeping programs and participated in multinational field training exercises, adding to the professional exposure.[51]

Although the ACRI is proving to be an effective military to military engagement policy for the United States, there have been challenges since its implementation in 1996. Unfortunately, most African nations that belong to the OAU have failed to meet current standards for inclusion into these selected military programs. Even nations with close ties with the United States, such as Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Nigeria, considering joining the ACRI, are precluded by either conflicts with other African nations, military coups or internal conflicts. This suggests other initiatives on a lesser scale may be appropriate as a precursor to ACRI. Another challenge to the ACRI program is Africa's complex and sometimes bewildering skepticism and confusion of the military's role in preventing or resolving conflict as a tool of democracy. One must keep in mind that African armies were created by the European colonialists to protect colonizers against rebellion by the colonized. Over forty years of independence from the European powers provides ample examples of where African armies have been used by their own political or military leaders as a tool of repression and genocide, rather than as an effective means to defend a nation or advance democracy.[52] Skepticism and confusion can only be overcome by trust and demonstration through experience. The ACRI program can provide this.

Outside of the ACRI program, another successful tool in helping to shape the African security environment and achieve better civil-relationship is the United States African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). This program has played a huge role and continues to develop its usefulness as it provides programs at the senior level to educate both military and civilian leaders. It focuses on such topics as civil-military relations, national security decision making and defense planning and management.[53] The goals for the ACSS is to be a source of academic knowledge, promote the practical skill necessary to make effective national security decisions in democratic governments, and engage African leaders in substantial dialogue about defense planning in democracies. It encourages its participants to assess the importance of

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civilian control and military professionalism in democracies and examine civil-military relations in formulating and executing national security strategy.[54] Currently, the ACSS has rotated among several African nations playing host and in the future will look to build a permanent home.

Other United States military programs supported by the National Guard and Reserves of the United States play a pivotal role in Africa as well. Their involvement has included long term annual training projects, such as engineer construction of roads, hospitals, schools and water wells, as well as, medical treatment operations. Such projects demonstrate a proper role for the military while improving the infrastructure. They might well serve as another precursor initiative to ACRI involvement.

A critical element important to both the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa's military is the role of civil-military relationships. For African democracy to succeed or move forward, this relationship must be reinforced as much as possible. A key concept for improving Africa's security environment and enhancing civil military relations is through professional military education. U.S. military efforts include the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program, an instrument of national security and foreign policy which encourages increased understanding between the U.S. and foreign countries, and the Joint Combined Exercise Training Program (JCET), which permits United States Special Operations forces to train through interaction with foreign military forces.[55] Many of these programs have embedded military in support of democratic government themes that advocate a proper purpose and role.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the key impediments to stability and development in Africa has been the role of African militaries and the persistence of conflict. Strangely enough, the key to unlocking this destructive relationship in order to promote regional stability may lie with the United States military. African conflict and organized violence is not about international relations, but about domestic power. For the most part, the brutal violence is more about who will control the dwindling national wealth as opposed to national security. Political power and military strength bring relative wealth which is normally used for personal consumption and to fuel patronage networks, the modern legacy of the colonial system. The increasing level of violence and failing states may finally force Africans to look hard at their internal shortcomings in achieving their long sought independence. If the military has been the power that has deprived them of that independence since the end of European colonialism, paradoxically, it can also be the instrument that creates the stability for economic, political, and social advancement.

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The current United States policy goals and supporting military strategy demonstrates America's commitment towards Sub-Sahara Africa. In the near term, United States strategic policy for Africa is evolving into an effective tool for resolving conflict within that region. In the longer term, the ACRI and ACSS strategy will solidify the establishment of enduring relationships and permanent institutions similar to those that have proven successful in other regions of the world. Other military ways and means to achieve our policy objectives through various programs are in place.

While ACRI, ACSS or other military programs independently do not promise to be the answer to all possible crises in Africa, each forms an important part of a larger continuum aimed at more democratic conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction. Yet, American support for conflict resolution in Africa–less than $100 million for the entire region over the past five years – is remarkably small when compared, for example, to the one billion dollars that the U.S. government is spending each year for the Bosnia and Kosovo Peacekeeping operations.[56] Such programs merit enhancement and fiscal support, reinforcing success before an African nation becomes a Bosnia.

Several recommendations are essential to make effective United States security policy in Sub-Sahara Africa through 2010. First, the United States must fully support the continue development and funding of the ACSS and ACRI programs. As United States national interest grows we must increase material and financial assistance to facilitate African conflict resolution and work in sincere collaboration with the United Nations to further resolve current conflicts in the region. Second, the United States should play a leading role in African peacekeeping operations and other conflict resolution activities. Third, the United States should increase the level of funding for assistance programs that are aimed at promoting democracy and equitable economic development in African countries.[57]

The United States focus should be on strengthening the sub regional organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). A key to achieving United States strategic objectives is more affordable by focusing on selective key actor states in those developing sub-regions and partnering with those states that are striving to make economic and political progress in tandem with military supported initiatives.

The use of the American military, as a role model for democratic professionalism through its officer and senior enlisted corps, to demonstrate a proper civil-military relationship with elected officials may be the key to breaking the paradoxical conundrum to allow Sub-Saharan Africa to move into the global community of the 21st Century. The pivotal question for strategic

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leadership is-- will the United States seize this historic opportunity, exercise its political will and commit to a long term effort, and provide the economic and military resources to shape a future Africa to meet United States interests.

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[2] Thomas O'Toole, "The Historical Context," in <u>Regional Strategic Appraisal: Africa</u>, vol 1 (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College, 2002), 23, 48.

[3] Herbert M. Howe, <u>Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States</u> (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 27-31.

[4] The ideas in this paragraph and the remainder of this section are based on a syntheses of remarks made by several instructors participating in the Sub-Saharan Regional Strategic Appraisal, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 29 Jan 02; the source cited, and the author's own thoughts.

[5] O'Toole, 25.

[6] William Minter, "Africa's' Second Independence'," <u>Foreign Policy In Focus</u> undated; available from <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/papers/africa>; Internet; accessed 27 Sep 2001.

[7] Spanier and Hook, 105-106.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Howe, 40-41.

[10] Ibid, 31-33.

[11] Ibid, 34 –36.

[12] Ibid, 29.

[13] Spanier and Hook, 107-110.

[14] Ibid, 107.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Claude Welch, <u>Soldier and the State in Africa</u> (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 33.

[17] Steven Metz, <u>Refining American Strategy in Africa</u> (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2000), 20.

[18] Howe, 37.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Peta Ogaba Agbese, "New Patterns of Civil Military Relations in Africa"; in Preparing Africa for the Twenty-First Century, ed. John Mukum Mbaku (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.,1999), 225-228.

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[22] Metz, 20-25.

[23]Robert Oakley and Jendayi Frazier, "Sub-Saharan Africa ' Progress or Drift', " in Strategic Assessment 1999 (Fort McNair, Washington D.C.: National Defense University, 1999),160-164.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid. 154.

[26]Ibid., 161-162.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., 153.

[29]Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, African Foreign Policies: Power and Process (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 6-7.

[30] The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made by several instructors participating in the Sub-Saharan Regional Strategic Appraisal, Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College; 25 Feb 02.

[31]U.S. Department of State, "African Crisis Response Initiative," 10 Oct, 2000; available from <http://www.usinfo.state.gov/regional/af/acri>; Internet;. accessed 19 January 2002.

[32]Khadiagala and Lyons, 7.

[33]William Reno, "External Relations of Weak States and Stateless Regions in Africa," in African Foreign Policies "Power and Process," eds. Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 187-189.

[34]Metz, 4.

[35]Daniel Volman, "Peace and Military Policy in Africa", Foreign Policy in Focus, vol 2, no 9; 9 January 1997, available from <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/briefs/vol2/v2n9afr_body html>; Internet; Accessed January 19, 2002. 1-8.

[36]Metz, 4.

[37]Ibid., 10.

[38]The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made by several instructors participating in the Sub-Saharan Regional Strategic Appraisal, Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College; 29 Jan 02

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Agbese, 227.

[43]Susan E. Rice, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, "Lecture 'The U.S. Stake in a Secure, Prosperous Africa'," 3 November 1999; available from <http://www.state.gov/www/policyremarks/1999/991103ricehoward.html>; Internet; accessed 19 January 2002.

[44]Ambassador Marshall McCallie, Ambassador to the Army War College, interview by author, 12 October 2001, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

[45]William J. Clinton, A Nation Security Strategy for a Global Age (Washington D.C.: The White House, December 2000), 61-65.

[46]Volman, 1-5.

[47]Kristen Obadal, Country Profile of Botswana, 2nd ed. (McLean: Regional Security Division May 2001), 2–5. Note: Prepared for the Operations Division, Deputy Chief of Staff, Headquarters United States Army Europe and Seventh Army.

[48]McCallie interview.

[49]Obadal, 4.

[50]U.S. Department of State "African Crisis Response Initiative."

[51]Ibid.

[52]Kent Hughes Butts and Steven Metz, Armies and Democracy in the New Africa: Lessons from Nigeria and South Africa (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 9 January 1996), 37–39.

[53]Metz, 36.

[54]Daniel W. Henk and Martin Revayi Rupiya, <u>Funding Defense: Challenges of Buying Military Capability in Sub-Saharan Africa</u> (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, U.S. Army College, Strategic Studies Institute, September 2001), 29-31.

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